

No room for racism in the Kingdom of God

June 3, 2020 \* Langford Community Church \* Graham Gladstone

Watching the news coming out of the United States breaks my heart.

It breaks my heart that George Floyd died the way he did.

It breaks my heart that others are dying protesting his death.

It breaks my heart that looters and mischief-makers have drawn attention away from legitimate concerns.

And it breaks my heart to know that this is not an isolated incident.

There is an uncomfortable undercurrent of racial inequality in America.

There's an uncomfortable undercurrent of racism in our nation.

And there's even an uncomfortable inequality in the Church.

That's why I feel compelled to say something that I think we all know but bears repeating.

That's underselling it. It bears being writ large over everything we do.

There is no room for racism in the Kingdom of God.

Did you get that? There is no room for racism in the Kingdom of God.

Anybody who thinks that the Kingdom's just for whites is sorely mistaken.

Look at Revelation 7:9 – This is a picture of the Kingdom in eternity -

9 After this I looked and there before me was a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, tribe, people and language, standing before the throne and in front of the Lamb. They were wearing white robes and were holding palm branches in their hands.

10 And they cried out in a loud voice: "Salvation belongs to our God, who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb." (Rev 7:9-10 NIV).

That's the Kingdom – people from every tribe and tongue and nation – blacks and whites and Asians and Indians and aboriginal people – all honouring the Lamb who died to redeem all of them. There is no master race, only the Master, and we are all precious in His sight. There's no room for racism in the Kingdom.

And since – as believers - we are citizens of THAT Kingdom in THIS world, we should live with the multicultural, multiethnic values of the Kingdom now, honouring people of different cultures and different nations.

Paul says in Ephesians 2:14 that God broke down every wall that separated Jews and Gentiles to make one people and He continues to pursue that same racial reconciliation among all peoples. There is no superior race in God's eyes, only fallen people in need of redemption and He offers it to all. We need to extend that same unconditional love and acceptance to everyone.

How do we do that? Well, I think we need to learn from the Good Samaritan. Remember - that story answers the question 'who is my neighbour?' and tells the scandalous story of a 'hated Samaritan' helping a Jewish man. Imagine an African American stopping to help a white supremacist in need and you get something of the shock of the parable.

And what's the point? Your neighbour is anyone who needs help, regardless of race. Skin colour does not trump being a neighbour - love unconditionally as God loves you. Ain't no room for racism in the Kingdom.

To close, I want to quote someone I went to school with, who married a roommate of mine, who is of Haitian descent. She writes:

"The greatest commandment is to love the Lord with all your heart, soul, mind, and strength, and love your neighbour as yourself.

But who is my neighbour? The one who doesn't look/talk/speak like me. The Samaritan. The despised. The rejected. The ridiculed. The oppressed.

But what is love? Greater love hath no man than this: that he lay down his life for his friends. Put aside your pride and listen. Put aside your ignorance and learn.

Let's think on these verses as we consider racism in our churches, communities, and countries. Let's think on these verses as we decide how to respond."

Let's examine the way we talk about people of different races and the subconscious ways that we act towards them.

And let's respond with this conviction – there's no room for racism in the Kingdom; there's no room for racism in my heart.